

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition comprising water, a water-soluble solvent, a water-soluble resin, a dye, and a quick-drying property imparting agent, wherein the dye, if soluble in said water-soluble solvent, has a solubility in water lower than a solubility in the water-soluble solvent, said solubility of the dye in water being 10 wt% or lower, and the quick-drying property imparting agent has a solubility in water lower than a solubility in said water-soluble solvent, with the boiling point of the water-soluble solvent being lower than the boiling point of water, or the vapor pressure of the water-soluble solvent being higher than the vapor pressure of water, and

wherein the melting point of the quick-drying property imparting agent is in the range of 20-250°C, the solubility in water of the quick-drying property imparting agent is 10 wt% or lower, and the quick-drying property imparting agent is present in the ink composition in an amount within the range of 0.5-10 wt %.

2. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the content of the water in the ink composition is in the range of 3-95 wt %, and the ratio of the respective amounts ~~contents~~ of the water and the water-soluble solvent which are present on a weight basis is in the range of 9:1-3:7 ~~, and boiling point of the water-soluble solvent is lower than that of the water or vapor pressure of the water-soluble solvent is higher than that of the water.~~

3. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the solubility of the quick-drying property imparting agent in water is in the range of 0.1-60 wt%, and the solubility of the quick-drying property imparting agent in the water-soluble solvent is in the range of 0.5-80 wt%.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the quick-drying property imparting agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of oxazole compounds and triazole compounds.

6. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 5, wherein the quick-drying property imparting agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of 1,2,3-benzotriazole, benzotriazole-5-carboxylic acid, 1H-benzotriazole-1-methanol, N-(1H-benzotriazol-1-ylmethyl)formamide, benzoxazole, 2-mercaptobenzoxazole, 4-benzylamino-7-nitro-2,1,3-benzoxadiazole, and 2-benzoxazolinone.

7. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the water-soluble solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of alcohol, ketone and ether solvents.

8. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 7, wherein the water-soluble solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of alcohols of not more than 3 carbon atoms.

9. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 8, wherein the water-soluble solvent is ethanol or propanol.

10. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the water-soluble resin is at least one resin selected from the group consisting of polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyvinyl alcohol, polyurethane, polyacrylic acid, polyether and copolymers thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein ~~content of~~ the water-soluble resin is present in the ink composition in an amount within ~~is in~~ the range of 0.1-8 wt%.

12. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the dye is at least one dye selected from the group consisting of fluorescent dyes, inorganic dyes, organic dyes and solvent-insoluble dyes, and the solubility of the dye in water at 25 °C is not higher than 10 wt%.

13. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 12, wherein the dye is a fluorescent dye containing a rare earth element and a ligand.

14. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 13, wherein the rare earth element in the fluorescent dye is europium and the ligand is thenoyltrifluoroacetone or naphthoyltrifluoroacetone.

15. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein ~~content of~~ the fluorescent dye ~~is present~~ in the ink composition in an amount within ~~is in~~ the range of 0.1-5 wt%.

16. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the total content of the components of the ink composition other than the water and the water-soluble solvent is in the range of 5-10 wt%.

17. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, which additionally contains at least one surface treating agent selected from the group consisting of silicone-based surface treating agents and fluorine-based surface treating agents.

18. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 17, wherein ~~content of~~ the surface treating agent is present in the ink composition ~~is in~~ in an amount within the range of 0.01-2 wt%.

19. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, which additionally contains at least one additive selected from the group consisting of binders, charge donating agents, pH adjusters, fluorescent sensitizers, surface treating agents, surface active agents, leveling agents, anti-foaming agents, germicides, and antioxidants.

20. (Original) An aqueous ink composition according to claim 1, which has a viscosity in the range of 1-8 cP and a flash point of not lower than 20°C.